

The Unreasonableness of Infidelity.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. Martins in the Fields, April 6. 1696.

B E I N G T H E

Fourth of the L E C T U R E

For this Present Y E A R,

Founded by the Honourable

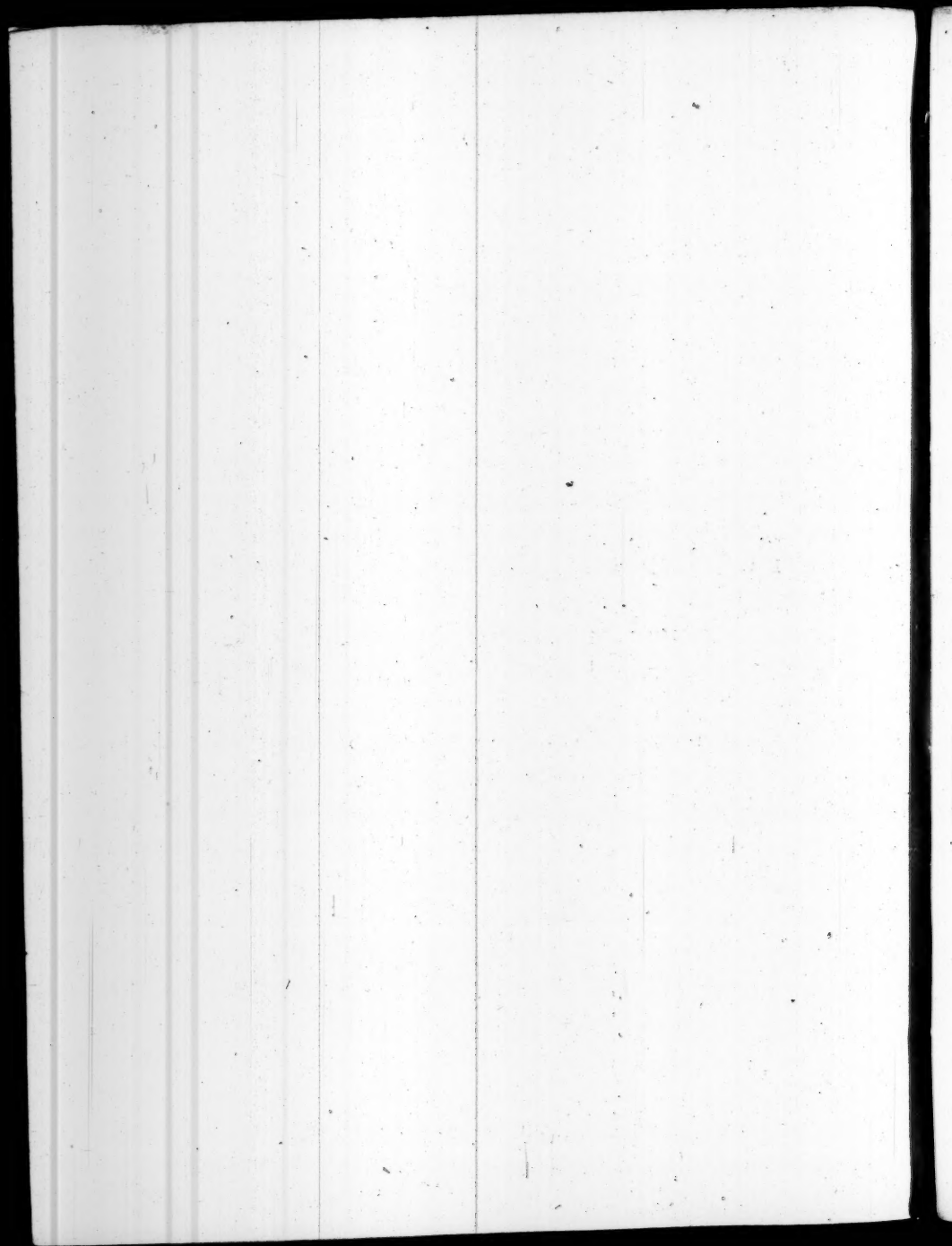
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L O N D O N :

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LUKE XVI. 31.

And he said unto him, If they bear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead.



FROM the 19th. Verse of this Chapter to the end, under the Parable of (if I may so call it) the Rich man and *Lazarus*, there is a way proposed, by which we may best judge of the wisdom and folly, the happiness and misery of Mankind. And it is as if our Saviour had said; Suppose we a man as happy as the world can make him, abounding in Prosperity, Wealth, Ease and Luxury, that wanted nothing for his Vanity, for he was in a condition honourable and splendid, *was cloathed in Purple, and fine Linen, and Silk*; nothing for his Appetite, for he *fared sumptuously every day*. And when he died, was buried with Ceremony and Pomp agreeable to his Quality.

*Irenæus,
Origen,
Cyril,
Hierom,
think
it not a
Parable.*

ἡ δὲ πόσις.

Suppose we on the other hand a person as
 miserable as this world can make him, poor
 so as to *beg* ; full of Sores and Ulcers, so as not
 able to help himself ; destitute of Friends, so as
 to be *cast* at the Rich man's gate ; hunger-star-
 ved so as to need the very crumbs which fell from
 the other's table ; contemned so as not to be re-
 garded though lying at the gate, in the passage
 and view of all ; or if taken notice of, yet
 so as not to be relieved ; naked, so as not to
 have wherewith to cover his Body, or to de-
 fend his sores from the cold, and that found
 more pity among the dogs than men, while
 alive (for they came and licked his sores) ; and
 when dead through want, pain and anguish,
 found as little charity to bury him. Thus far
 we find them as unlike as can be in their pre-
 sent condition.

But now let us follow them beyond the
 Grave, and see what becomes of them in the
 other world. There we find the poor *Lazarus*,
 that once pitiful, contemptible, necessitous
 wretched Creature, that wanted what the dogs
 had here, the crumbs of the Table, taken care of
 at his death by the Holy Angels, and carried
 by them into a place of safety and rest, com-
 fort and happiness, where *Abraham* was, and
 there

Mat. 15.
 27.

there prefer'd to a place of honour and kindness ; for he lay in *Abraham's Bosom* , having no poverty, nor sores, nor contempt, nor any of the *evil things* he received in his Life-time here.

This he had because of his afflictions that he endured , and bore with admirable patience ; because of his steady dependance upon God, and an humble submission to him in the most deplorable condition.

On the other hand , the Rich man when he died went to Hell , where he had none of the Ease and Luxury, the Respect and Honour, none of the good things he received in his life-time, but was tormented in a flame, wanting water there as much to cool his tongue, and quench his insatiable thirst, as *Lazarus* did before the crumbs which fell from his Table to satisfy his hunger. There he was, and there he was to abide, for there was a great Gulph fixed, that rendred him as incapable of receiving relief in the other world, as he was neglectful and unwilling to give it to such as needed in this.

This he had for his Pride and Unmercifulness, for his Contempt of God, and of others better than himself. This he was too late sensible of as to himself ; he lift up his eyes, but he was in torments ; he cried to his Father *Abraham*, but he

he proves inexorable ; he calls for mercy , but is minded of his former ingratitude to God, and his uncharitableness to others, and is put to silence with a *Son remember, that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, ver. 25.*

When he could not prevail for himself, he then turns his thoughts towards his *Five brethren*, whom he left behind, that were as careless, and so likely at last to be as miserable as himself, and intreats *Abraham* that *Lazarus* might be sent to testify unto them, how it was with him, and how it would also be with them unless they repented, *ver. 27.* To which *Abraham* replies, *ver. 29.* *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.* But that doth not satisfy him, and he urges further : *Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went from the dead, they will repent, ver. 30.* This he speaks from his own Experience, who had *Moses and the Prophets* as well as they, and yet he was as secure and careless, as if he had never heard or knew what they Taught ; and therefore unless some other Expedient be thought of, or some other means used, they are like in the conclusion to be as miserable as himself ; and surely that, if any, would prevent it, *if one went from the dead.* But to this *Abraham* replies in the Text,
they

If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead; that is, if they give no Credit nor regard to what is contained in their Writings concerning a Future State of rewards and punishments, they are incurable, neither will they be persuaded to repent, (as it is ver. 30.) though one rise from the dead.

That there is a Future State of Happiness or Misery, in which the Souls of men do live after a separation from their Bodies, has been in all Ages universally received: But yet was not so convincingly to be proved from the sole light of Reason, but that a fuller evidence of it was very desirable: For which there are but two ways, Either that of Divine Revelation, by persons Divinely Inspired; Or by the return of one from the Dead, who was before known to the Living. And these are the ways taken here into consideration by our Saviour, in the case before us: Where there may be three sorts of persons concerned.

1. Those that had not *Moses* and the Prophets, and were wholly without a Revelation; as was the case of the Heathens: And how shall they believe, who have not heard? Rom. 10. 14.

2. Those that had *Moses* and the Prophets,
B and

6 *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity.*

and yet were incredulous, and did not believe what *Moses* and the Prophets relate concerning a Future State. Such were the *Sadducees*, who held
Matt. 22. there was no resurrection, angel, nor spirit exist-
23. ing out of a Body.

Acts 23. 8. 3. Those that had *Moses* and the Prophets, and did believe what was therein revealed, concerning the Soul's Immortality and a Future Life, but were not thereby persuaded to repent. Such were the *Pharisees*, who professed to believe what the *Sadducees* denied: And of this sort were the Rich man (here spoken of) and his Five Brethren supposed to be.

Now toward the conviction of each of these, it might be supposed, that if one rose from the dead, the former would be persuaded to believe, and the latter to repent.

Thus the Heathens reasoned, who had no Revelation. As that Excellent person *Canus Julius* (that *Seneca* speaks of) who just before his

* Vos quæritis an Immortales animæ sint. Ego jam sciam. Execution said to his Friends, * Ye are inquisitive to know whether the Souls are Immortal; I shall now know. And he promised, † If he found it so, that he would go about among his Friends, and would inform them what was the state of departed Souls.

And

And the same *Seneca*, when discoursing to *Lucilius* about the behaviour of *Bassus Aufidius*, how dying he spake of Death as a Friend, and what a confirmation this gave to the Doctrine of the Souls Immortality, he adds, *But I suppose you would more firmly believe it, if one should return to life again, and should declare that he found no evil in death.*

* Plus ut puto haberet fidei apud te, si quis revixisset, & in morte nihil mali esse narraret *Expertus. Epist. 30.*

To this they gladly repaired as an evidence where they found it. And therefore *Plato* produceth the instance of *Erus Armenius*, that after he had been dead Twelve days, revived, and gave much such an account of the other State, as we have in this Parable. *De Rep. l. 10.*

But 'tis the case of Revelation we Christians are more immediately concerned in, and which our Saviour here speaks to, and prefers before the Testimony of one rising from the dead.

The way here proposed concerning the coming of one from the dead, has somewhat of common Experience on its side. For we see that notwithstanding the clear Revelation of another state in Scripture, and the belief that men have of it, yet generally they are but little affected with these Arguments, though al-

lowed to be of the greatest importance, because they lie dead in a Book, and are proposed to them by such as have no more personal Experience of these things than themselves, having never been out of this world, nor had any sight of, or conversation with the other.

But now if a special Messenger should be sent from the other world ; a *Lazarus* who was known to them when alive, and known by them to be dead ; one that had been an ocular witness of the things he spoke of and related , and should tell them, that as there is a state of Happiness for good men , so a state of Misery for the wicked , a state of Misery without ease , respite , or hope of deliverance , and confirmed all by his appearance, surely this would move them : Surely no heart so hard, but this must penetrate ; no mind so stupid, but this must awaken ; no Sinner so incorrigible, but this must reclaim. And it may be left to every one to judge , Whether if there were such an Apparition that should come upon this terrible Errand, any one could see and hear it with the same calmness and indifference, as he hears a Sermon, or reads a Chapter in the Bible upon this serious Argument.

So that the advantage seems to be much on the
the

the side of the Apparition ; and the Proposal here made, agreeable to the Common sense of Mankind.

But how probable a course soever this seems to be , yet our Saviour here determines on the contrary , *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets ; neither , &c.* Which Answer may be resolved into these Two parts.

1. That the Arguments contained in the Scriptures, are sufficient to persuade men to repent.

2. When men disregard the Holy Scriptures, (the ordinary means of Salvation) so as not to be persuaded to repent by the Arguments therein contained, they will not be persuaded by means extraordinary, and *though* , for example, *one should rise from the dead.*

The first of these, *viz.* *That the Arguments contained , &c.* is supposed , ver. 29. when *Abraham* saith, *they have Moses and the Prophets , let them hear them :* And this the other doth not deny.

Now the chief Arguments relating to this Subject are briefly touched upon in this Parable ; which are these :

1. That the Souls of men are Immortal. This is implied when the Rich man and *Lazarus* are said to be in Being after they were dead, ver. 22.

2. That

2. That the state into which the Souls of men are disposed after death, is a state of recompence, *Abraham saith, ver. 25. He is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

3. That that state of recompence is a state of unchangeable happiness to some, and of endless misery to others, *ver. 26. Between us and you there is a great gulph fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you [to relieve you], cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence [for relief].*

4. That men are disposed to happiness or misery there, according to their behaviour in this world, *ver. 25. saith Abraham, Son, remember, that thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

These are Considerations of such force and consequence, that this miserable person desires not that *Lazarus* should be sent to argue upon them with his Five Brethren, but to testify concerning their reality.

Arguments they are of such force, that he that will not by these be persuaded to repent, will never be persuaded by any other. But though this be all granted to be true (as it's supposed), yet in his opinion, as the case would admit

admit further evidence, so it seemed to need it; and therefore if this extraordinary course were taken of sending one from the dead, *they would* (in his opinion) certainly *repent*, who with the ordinary means continue impenitent.

This brings to the 2d General.

2. When men disregard the ordinary means of Salvation, and are not to be persuaded to repent by the Arguments revealed in holy Scripture, they will not be persuaded by means extraordinary, and though one should come from the dead to persuade them.

For the resolving of which point, we are to consider what are the reasons why the ordinary means of Salvation, such as the holy Scriptures are, prove ineffectual; which cannot be from the want of proper and forcible Arguments; for whatever one from the dead can say to move or persuade, is as plainly deliver'd in Scripture. He cannot more expressly tell them that there is a God, that the Souls of men are Immortal, that there is a Heaven and a Hell, than the Scripture doth. And therefore if what is thus revealed, and believed upon such Revelation, should not prove as effectual, as what is reported by a special Messenger from the dead; it must be from some reasons which belong to the one, and not
to

to the other ; but that there is no ground for ; and therefore from whence can this proceed, but from the excessive love to the things of this Life, and the indulgence men give to themselves in the enjoyments of it ? Whence should this proceed but from the power of those Lusts and Vicious Habits they have contracted ?

And where these and the like causes are, a Messenger from the other world will make no stronger an impression, nor will an impression thereby made, be of any longer continuance, than in the other case : But that he that will not be persuaded by *Moses* and the Prophets, will not be persuaded though one come from the dead.

And this I shall make good,

1. By parallel and suitable cases and instances.

2. By a particular inquiry into the causes of impenitence, which will hold in one case as well as the other.

1. By parallel cases.

As,

(1.) If means as extraordinary, and more extraordinary than the coming of one from the dead, have failed in this point, and not persuaded men to repentance, we have as little reason

son to expect, nor can it reasonably be presumed, that the coming of one from the dead, should persuade and become effectual.

As for instance; Let us consider the case of *Pharaoh*, before whom such stupendious Miracles were wrought, and upon whom such astonishing Judgments were inflicted, as could not in reason be supposed resistible: When the Waters, Earth, and Air, Beasts, Fishes, and Fruits of the Earth, Men and Children, either felt or were made the instruments of Divine Vengeance. Could it be thought that when the Waters were turned into Blood, and Frogs covered the face of the Earth, and the Dust of it was converted into Lice, and the plague of Flies followed that of Lice; and Murrain, Flies; and Boils, the Murrain; and Hail, Boils; and Locusts, Hail; and Darkness Locusts; and the killing of the First-born, the Darkness; that he should yet be so obstinate as not to let the people of *Israel* go; and when he did, should follow them into the midst of the Sea? Could disappointment, vexation, and revenge, so far infatuate him, that Miracle after Miracle, Scourge upon Scourge, could not persuade him, nor the sense of so imminent a danger stop him in his career, but that he persisted in his first resolution,

C

Exod. 7.
8, 9, 10.

tion, and blinded thus with rage, pursued it to his destruction? Can it be supposed now, that one from the dead could more have prevailed upon him than this Scene of Judgments? Could it have come with so much terror? Or if it should, may not the Sinner be alike obstinate and infatuated? May not the like passions and sensual affections, or a habit of Sin, keep a person from hearkening to, or following the advice of one come from the dead?

Deut. 1.
32.
Psal. 78.
22. 32.
56. 106.
24.
Nehem.
9. 16.

Let us consider again, how it was with the *Israelites*, who had not only been Spectators of those Miracles and Judgments in *Egypt*, but stood safe in the midst of them; that were preserved, directed, and fed by a continued Series of Miracles, and yet were not only upon every occasion tempting and provoking God by their distrust, impatience and murmuring, but were for returning into *Egypt* again.

Thus it was also with their Posterity in our Saviour's time, who notwithstanding the plain fulfilling of their ancient Prophecies in him, notwithstanding the Innocency of his Life, the Purity, Sanctity, and Evidence of his Doctrine, the Power of his Miracles, changing the course of Nature as he pleased; healing the Sick, opening the Eyes of such as were born blind, casting

ing out Devils, and raising the Dead. Nay, notwithstanding his Resurrection, and the unquestionable confirmation of it, yet continued obstinate and incredulous, and what they could not deny, would impute to *Beelzebub*. Mat. 12.
13.

Now what comparison is there between the coming of one from the dead, and this case? Or what reason is there to conceive that a wicked *Jew* should have been more effectually reclaimed from a Vicious course of Life, and be made a penitent by the coming of one from the dead, than the *Jewish* Infidel should be made a Convert by all those numerous Miracles, and become a Christian? And why may not the one be as well impenitent, as the other an Infidel?

2. It may be supposed in reason, that what a person hears from another, should in a matter of importance alike affect him in one case as in another: And if he is not persuaded by the one, there is no reason to expect he should be prevailed upon by the other.

Such indeed is the Testimony of one rising from the dead, who must be acknowledged to be a very fit Evidence concerning the reality of a Future State, and the condition of Separate Souls in it, as he has been personally

acquainted with it, and had a part in it.

But such also is the Testimony of a trembling Sinner, that after a vicious course of Life, entring upon the confines of death, and expecting every moment to be snatched away by that inexorable Enemy, feels now the anguish no less than he formerly relished the pleasures of his Sin; that cries out in the bitterness of his Soul, That he is sensible, but he fears too late, of his former folly: That he is now prey'd upon by a Thousand Vipers, and feels a Hell in himself before he descends into it.

And in this Agony calls upon all about him, and the once Sworn Companions in his Vices, to take warning by him, and no longer to entertain themselves with the charms of those noxious pleasures he is now burdened with the guilt of, and would not for a world repeat, if he was to live his Life over again.

Is not here a living and present Testimony? And if one should come from the dead, can he say more, or can his Testimony be of greater force concerning the State he comes from, than this of the awakened penitent, if not despairing Sinner, is, concerning the Evil, the Guilt, and Terror of Sin?

And

And yet if this be not attended to, or the force of it be soon carried off by a Glas of Wine, and the charms of Company and Temptation, or tract of Time; Can it be supposed that the same Event may not happen to the other? And will not the hardned and impenitent Sinner as much despise, or as soon forget the admonitions of this ghostly Monitor, as those of a dying desponding Friend?

3. It may be expected that what a person sees himself, should more affect him, than what he hears only by the report of others. And if what he sees, (though in a matter of necessity and importance) makes little or no impression upon him; how can it be supposed, that what he hears only from another should affect him? And this is the case: For if one came from the dead to bear witness to the truth of a Future State of recompence, and of the misery of impenitent Souls in it, it's only testimony and report, and what can neither be of that certainty nor force, as if the person to whom he comes upon this errand, had himself been in that State.

But now there are those things which a person sees, and which should in reason, according to the nature of the things, as much move him

him, as the Testimony of one coming from the dead.

And of this kind is Death, which we every day have in view, and are no more secured against the very next moment, than those that are already departed.

The plain consequence of which is this, That 'tis then our greatest wisdom so to order our selves and all our affairs, that we may meet it without surprize or terror, and may live as we would wish we had done, when that fatal hour doth approach.

And yet if we take a view of Mankind, we find them generally as secure, as if they alone were immortal; or as improvident, as if they had death under such an obligation, that it must give them time and leisure sufficient to put all things in order, before it shall proceed to execute its Sentence.

Now if in a matter so apparent, sensible, and certain, there is so little, where there ought to be the greatest concernment, and Mankind is so difficultly moved, that they either don't consider, or the consideration of it makes them no wiser or better; what reason is there to imagine, that the testimony of another, though it be one from the dead, should make any lasting impression

pression upon them, and persuade them to repent ?

4. What a person feels himself, should in reason more affect him, than what he hears or sees of others:

And if what he himself feels makes little or no impression upon him, 'tis not to be conceived, that what he only sees or hears should move him.

In confirmation of which, we may reflect upon the common state and behaviour of Mankind, in the Judgments and Afflictions that befall them, the Dangers they are in, the Terrors they are under. In which and the like cases, we shall find them too often insensible and incorrigible, or inconstant and unresolved.

Sometimes they are insensible under the severest Judgments: As it was with *Abaz*, who for his Idolatry was delivered up to his Enemies; On the East, the King of *Assyria*; on the North, the King of *Israel*; on the South, the *Edomite*; on the West, the *Philistines*, invade and spoil his Territories; as we have it, *2 Chron.* 28. 5, 6, 17, 18.

And yet when brought thus low for his Transgressions, it's said of him, *In the time of his distress he trespassed yet more against the Lord*, ver. 22.

At

At other times, if sensible, yet they are inconstant, and in the event prove incorrigible. As it was with the *Israelites*, *Psal. 78. 34, &c.* *When he slew them, then they sought him, and enquired early after God, &c.* *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, &c.* *For their heart was not right with God, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*

Now can it be supposed that an Apparition of one from the dead should do more than these; and that He should by that be disposed to repent, whom the severest Judgments left impenitent?

Or suppose the Sinner terrified hereby, and melted into an affectionate temper; yet have we not examples of that kind every day, of persons that after all the terrors they are under, are set no nearer to a true repentance; and though they seem for a while by some good resolutions to make towards the Kingdom of Heaven, are never able to enter, (as our Saviour expresses it) *Luk. 13. 24.*

View we then a Sinner under the power of his convictions, in the time of danger and distress, when he has no way to escape.

How terrified has he been in his own mind at the approaches of death! How Grave, Solemn and Serious has it made him! How importunate

nate has he been for Mercy, and for some longer time to finish his Repentance ! What Promises, Resolutions, and Vows has he made ! What Imprecations has he wished upon himself, if ever he should prove false to them ; and desired no mercy if ever he should break them ! Lord, will he say, "Spare me but "this once ; try me but once more, and then "if I return to my former Sins, or neglect to "put my self into a capacity for thy favour "and mercy, let me never find it. As it was with Pharaoh, who said to Moses, *Forgive my Sin only this once, and intreat the Lord that he may take away from me this death only*, *Exod. 10. 16.*

Now could the Apparition of one from the dead do more than this ? Can we suppose the Sinner more terrified, more seriously concerned and resolved, than when he had his own Conscience thus impartially representing the case to him, and Almighty God awakening his Conscience by an extraordinary Providence ?

And now let us consider the event of this, and whether after this tender disposition of mind, and seeming resolution, he is a true Penitent ; or that, in the Phrase of the Text, *he will repent*, and that this will necessarily be the issue of it.

Suppose we then this Languishing person

D

reicued

rescued out of the jaws of Death by a merciful Providence, and put into the Condition of making a second tryal, and of giving a proof of his thankfulness to God, and of his fidelity to his Sick-bed Vows and Resolutions.

Let us suppose him again breathing in a free Air, and having all the enticing Objects afresh presented to him, that he was before conversant with.

Let us trace him along, and we shall find him, as the terror and sense of his danger wears off, first covertly looking, then remotely following, at last overtaking and closing with the same temptations; and perhaps plunging himself further into the same Licentious state than before.

Grant we now that there is a just reason for the Sinner's terror, if the Ghost of his Deceased Friend, and the once inseparable Partner in his Vices, should appear, and plainly represent to him the desert of Sin in the Miseries of another Life, and the certainty of his having a Portion in them without repentance. Grant we (and he must be a stone rather than a man, whom it has no influence upon) that he is brought by it into the state of *Belshazzar*, Dan. 5. that his *Countenance is changed*, and his

his *Thoughts* so trouble him, that the *joints of his Loins* are unloosed, and his *Knees* smite one against another. Yet still this may be, and he be no true Penitent, nor this prove a means effectual enough to reform him. For a man repents no further than his *Will and Temper* is changed; and if these remain the same, he no more repents to whom the dead has appeared (whatever terrors he may be under) than he that was upon the borders of *Death*: And he may and will as soon as he, upon occasion, repent of his repentance. So certainly true is that which was before observed, That the causes which hinder men from being persuaded to repentance by the *Arguments of Scripture*, will also keep them from being persuaded by means extraordinary, such as the coming of one from the dead. And that the *cares of this world*, and the *deceitfulness of riches*, and the *lusts of other things*, will as well render the extraordinary means ineffectual, as *choke the Word of God*, and make it *unfruitful*. Mark
4. 19.

Let God send all the *Plagues of Egypt*, and yet *Pharaoh* will harden his heart: Let the *Sea* be divided, and *Manna* rained from *Heaven*, and *Water* break out of the *Rock*, and the *Water of the Rock* follow them for 40 years

1 Cor.
10. 4.

together. Let them have a Cloud by Day, and a Pillar of Fire by Night as their Guide, and an Angel for their Safeguard, and yet the *Israelites* will be tempting, provoking, and murmuring. Let one come *and do the works which never man did* ; give sight to the Blind ; feet to the Lame ; health to the Sick ; life to the Dead. Let the Sun be darkened ; the Rocks rend ; the Graves be opened, and the Dead appear : Nay, let him that did all this, and for whose sake it was done, rise again from the Dead, and visibly ascend into Heaven ; yet the obstinate *Jew* will be incredulous. Let a Ghost appear, and preach over the despised Doctrines of the Soul's Immortality, and the reality of a Future State, and of a Judgment to come, and reinforce it from his own Knowledge and Experience, and verify all this by his return from the Dead : And yet the Sinner, the customary Sinner, is not to be reclaimed ; *who like the deaf Adder stops his ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he never so powerfully and wisely*, Psal. 58. 5.

It's then all one whether it be *Moses* and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, Revelation, or the Resurrection of one from the Dead, when the Temper is otherwise inclined :

inclined : And if the Honours , Profits , Advantages, and Pleasures of the world do render the one, they will also render the other ineffectual. So true is that, *Wisd. 4. 12.* that *wickedness by bewitching, obscureth the things that are good* ; and will disarm all Arguments can be produced, of their Force and Efficacy.

2. I might further prove this, by considering the reasons why Men don't believe and repent, and the Excuses they make for delays in it ; which will as well frustrate the Testimony and Persuasions of one from the Dead, as it doth the Arguments of Divine Revelation.

(1.) The reasons have been partly shewed already, and they are the prevalency of Corrupt Inclinations ; the Presence of Temptations ; the Habits of Vice ; or a Worldly Interest ; which are the usual Obstructions to Repentance, and have a greater power over Men to detain them in Sin , than all the Arguments of the Gospel , and the Convictions of their own Minds, have to reclaim them from it. We see that though they have Line upon Line , the most powerful Motives in the World , such threatenings as make them at some times with *Felix* to tremble : Such comfortable Doctrines Acts 24. as make them at other times with *Herod* to hear 25. gladly :

Mark 6. 20. *gladly* : Such moving and awakening considerations, as bring them with *Balaam* to desire to dye , and further than him , to a desire to live the life of the Righteous ; yet they soon fail of their force ; and the *Felix* was the *Felix* that left his Preacher *Paul* in bonds : And the *Balaam* was the *Balaam* that as well took, as he loved, the wages of *unrighteousness* : And the *Herod* was the *Herod* that beheaded *John Baptist* whom he observed and heard with pleasure.

Acts 24. 27. Numb. 31. 16. 2 Pet. 2. 15.

For all these Passions are like Qualms that soon pass off , and prevail not so far as to alter the Temper. And where persons are thus under the power of their Lusts, they will continue in the same state , if one came from the Dead to warn and reprove them. And therefore if *John B.* had rose from the Dead, as *Herod* once imagined and believed, it would no more have made him a true Penitent, than the Preaching of that Holy Man did, when alive ; as long as *Herodias* was by him to seduce him , and he was contented to be seduced.

Matt. 14. 2.

(2.) The case is the same with persons in delaying heir Repentance ; and if the Excuse against the present necessity of it prevail in one case, they will also prevail in the other. So that he that will not be persuaded to a present Re-

Repentance, by the Arguments of the Gospel, will not be persuaded by the Testimony and Admonition of one from the Dead.

And upon the whole the Question is, Whether a person may not reason the same way, and as much to his own Delusion, against the Testimony and Persuasions of one from the Dead, as against the Authority and Arguments of Scripture, and at last be as far from Repentance and a present Repentance?

And whether there is not reason to conclude, That if these and the like Excuses prove sufficient to detain men in impenitency notwithstanding all the Arguments to the contrary, contained in Scripture; the same will not be of as much force, and have as much influence upon the Sinner, if one should come from the Dead to admonish him?

I am confident that this is not to be gainsaid.

And so the Proposition before laid down remains good, That the reasons for which persons give no heed to, or are not persuaded by the Authority and Arguments of Scripture, to believe and repent, will keep them from giving heed to, and being persuaded by the coming of one from the Dead.

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But this is a case I shall not further prosecute ; for it needs Consideration, rather than Proof.

I shall therefore close all with Three or Four Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, That there is no absolute need of any other course to be taken for the Conviction and Conversion of Sinners, than what is already taken ; or that extraordinary means should be used , where the ordinary are sufficient.

If there be a Revelation, which is believed certainly to be Divine, and the Arguments contained in that Revelation are sufficient to persuade men to believe and repent, Then there is no need of Miracles, nor of a Voice from Heaven, nor the Resurrection of one from the Dead. If there be impenitency with reason and proof sufficient to convince and persuade men , there will be impenitency still , with such proof as is more than sufficient. *These things are written that ye might believe, Joh. 20. 30.* And consequently, what is Written, is sufficient to persuade us to a belief of what is Written.

2. God is not bound to give, nor can men in reason desire or expect , that he should use
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an extraordinary course where the ordinary is sufficient ; and that one should rise from the Dead for their Conviction , who have *Moses* and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles. It was the Temper of *Thomas*, *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe,* Joh. 20. 25.

This was the Temper of the incredulous Jews, *Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe,* Matt. 27. 42. So *Celsus* the Heathen will have it, *If Christ were the Son of God, that he should have been ὡς περ ὁ ἥλιος*, like the Sun ; and the miserable person here would have one rise from the dead. Origen, 1. 2.

There will be no end if once we exceed the ordinary bounds, and expect evidence beyond what is sufficient : For then men may require to be rapt up into Paradise , as *St. Paul* 2 Cor. 12. 4. was ; or to see the heavens opened, and the Son of man Acts 7. 56. standing on the right hand of God, as did *St. Stephen* : John 14. 8. Nay, they may be as impertinent as *Philip*, and say, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth.*

3. We are bound to believe what we have sufficient evidence for ; and to repent when the Reasons and Motives to it are sufficient, though we have not all the Evidence that may be given, and that 'tis possible for God to give.

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'Tis possible for God to send a *Lazarus* from the Dead, to *testify* unto the impenitent, concerning the certainty of a place of torment in the other World.

And 'tis possible, though not very probable, (as I have shew'd) that may be a means to awaken such, and bring Them to repentance, whom the Doctrine of Divine Revelation, and the Arguments of Scripture could not prevail upon. But that doth not lessen the Obligation of believing and doing according to Revelation; and which without such further evidence is of it self sufficient for their Conversion.

4. Those that have the Evidence of Divine Revelation, and yet do not believe and repent according to that Revelation, are wholly inexcusable; *They have Moses and the Prophets, saith our Saviour, let them hear them; for that was sufficient, and all that was necessary to bring them to Repentance here, and Salvation hereafter. And if they that had Moses and the Prophets only, were inexcusable, what can those plead, who have not only Moses and the Prophets, but Christ and the Apostles, who have brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel? And who must therefore have so many more*

more reasons against them, as there are more for the confirmation of the Truth of our Religion, and for the conviction of Unbelievers, than there were under the Law : And therefore if any continue in a state of Unbelief and Impenitence under the Gospel, *it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for them.* If such do perish, 'tis wholly from themselves : If such do perish, 'tis not through want of Information sufficient to direct them ; not through want of Arguments powerful enough to convince them ; not through want of Authority sufficient to oblige them ; not through want of sufficient Grace to enable them ; not through want of Mercy in God, or Merit in a Saviour, or a Will, Desire or Endeavour in both to save them, but from themselves. And how just will then the Sentence of Condemnation be to such ! How will all Pleas then be prevented ! And how miserable must his case be, that is Condemned by himself before he is Condemned by God !

To conclude,

Here is Life and Death set before us, in the most pressing Arguments ; the most powerful Motives ; the most persuasive invitations to Repentance. We have here proposed to us
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all that *Moses* and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles have said to convince us : And we have still, through the Merciful Providence of God, means to assist us in it, and time and opportunity for the performance of it. But the time is coming, and will most certainly come, when, if we have not before believed and repented, Neither *Moses* nor the Prophets, neither *Abraham*, nor one greater than *Abraham*, will or can relieve us. And therefore how necessary is it for all now to hearken to *Moses* and the Prophets, to Christ and the Apostles, in this their Day ? For if they now hear them not, they can no more hereafter be saved, than they would have been persuaded though one had rose from the dead.

F I N I S.

